



Newsletter

Welcome Back...

October 2018 Volume 7 Issue 01

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new term. It is my hope that 2018/19 will prove to be another successful year in the Comprehensive School. I particularly want to welcome parents and guardians who are new to our School community.

This summer break has brought some retirements. Firstly I want to thank both Mr. Bunyan and Mr. Keenan who have moved on, for their commitment and contributions to the school over the years.

100 new first years joined us on August 27th as well as new students into senior cycle from other schools and other countries. These students are a welcome addition to our School.

Three times a year a newsletter like this is compiled. It is designed to keep you informed on various matters in our School. A more current and regular snapshot of our School can be gained by downloading the School app to your smartphone or by consulting the School website. I encourage all parents and guardians to regularly stay in touch through these outlets.

Best Wishes,
Richard Prendiville, Principal

Meeting of 1st Year Parents

All parents of 1st Year students are invited to attend a meeting in the school on **Thursday, October 18th 2018 at 7.15pm**. The meeting is designed to give parents guidance on option choices following sampling for 1st Years as well as explain other School structures in place to assist 1st Years. Your attendance is advised.

Year Heads / Co-ordinators

Naturally from time to time there will be settling problems at school, indeed there may equally be issues at home affecting your child, in any year group, therefore it is vital that we are let know if there are any concerns or difficulties; no matter how small they may appear. So if you have any concerns at all then you should contact your child's Year Head in the first instance.

The Year Heads for the academic year 2018/19 are:

- 1st Years** Ms. R. O'Donoghue
- 2nd Years** Ms. G. O'Callaghan
- 3rd Years** Mr. J. Connolly
- LC1 & LCA1** Ms. E. Fitzgerald
- LC2** Mr. J. Dore
- LCA2** Ms. Moloney
- TY Co-ordinator** Ms. M. Hogan
- LCVP Co-ordinator** Mr. P. McElligott

You may contact any of the above by telephoning the school office. All members of staff have their own formal timetabled classes and so may not be in a position to speak to you instantly but they will get back to you at their earliest convenience. Equally the Guidance Counsellor (Ms. Griffin), School Chaplain (Ms. Yvonne O'Connor), Deputy Principal and Principal may be contacted.

If you require a face to face meeting with any staff member then it is vital a pre-arranged appointment is made through the office. Unfortunately arriving at school without a pre-planned appointment in the hope of meeting a staff member cannot be accommodated.

School Closures

As part of the new Junior Cert, whole School teacher training continues this year. To facilitate this training Tarbert Comprehensive School will therefore close 2 days for students - **Thursday, October 4th 2018** and **Thursday, January 17th 2019**. Parents will be reminded by text closer to the days in question.

In-House Exams

I want to remind Parents / Guardians that we inform you about in-house exams dates at the beginning of each academic year so as to ensure that every student is available for the full duration of his/her scheduled exams.

Every effort will be made to accommodate any student who may miss an exam/part of the exams as a result of a bereavement or certified sickness but only within the duration of the in house exam dates themselves. In some situations parents may be asked to administer a missed exam in a controlled environment at home to their son/daughter. Unfortunately no exam can be administered to a student ahead of the scheduled exam date.

Students who miss an exam or exams due to family holidays, sporting or cultural commitments such as concerts, weddings, etc. cannot be accommodated in this manner.

Attendance

A reminder that this year sees Tarbert Comprehensive School on year 2 of its 3 year strategy (2017 – 2020) to increase attendance and reduce absence rates. While School statistics are above the national figures, I still feel there is room for improvement. Research has shown that regular student attendance is very important. Good attendance for example has been shown to lead to a positive impact on teaching and learning, increased student engagement and a positive impact on a student's educational outcomes. Equally there is less pressures for students when students don't miss out on classes and key parts of the curriculum.

All stake holders are involved in this strategy. However you as a Parent or Guardian have a central part to play and I wish to highlight the important roles you have:

- Take responsibility for your child's attendance
- Provide feedback on the policy and strategy through the Parents Association
- Be mindful that Extra Curricular Activities (ECA) must be balanced with over all school progress
- Keep updated on the importance of attendance at every level of school contact e.g. Newsletters, text messaging, website, app, information meetings etc.
- Use VSware as a resource to view attendance (including partial and whole day absences)
- Attend Parent Teacher (PT) meetings to discuss attendance
- Avoid taking family holidays during term time
- Comply with school absence procedures
- Encourage your child to value the entire school curriculum not just the academic as it fosters their holistic growth and development

These points summarise what is important from a Parental perspective. It should be noted that attendance can have just as much impact on student exam performance as their work rate or levels of study. In fact there is a direct correlation between underperformance in school and poor attendance rates.

School attendance should never be seen as something that can be treated as casual or irrelevant. I have therefore instructed all School staff to monitor attendance rates as an area of priority. The School will liaise with parents and outside agencies where attendance rates are significantly poor. However together, I am confident, we can meet our targets set for 2020 in this strategy and improve overall attendance rates by all students. Your cooperation as parents and guardians is therefore vital and your support is greatly appreciated.

Fitness Suite



Work has been underway across the summer break by Mr. Trench and other staff on equipping the fitness suite with equipment following the Schools successful application of the Sports Capital Grant. I am pleased to say our School Community will be able to enjoy the amazing facilities on offer.

I also want to credit the Parents Association who massively spearheaded the fundraising drive behind the fitness suite in order to provide additional facilities for our students. This facility is a testament to their endeavours.

School Calendar / Parent Teacher Meetings

The school calendar 18/19 is available to view and print from the school website under Policies & Publications. The calendar includes holidays, other school closures and important dates to remember. My advice is for parents to print it off and keep it nearby. The following however are the planned dates for Parent Teacher Meetings.

All meetings run from 4.15pm to 6.45 pm. **Parents are asked to arrive no later than 5.45pm so as to be assured of meeting your child's teachers.** A reminder to Parents of **LC2 & LC1** (only) students that students themselves must also attend along with their parents. The aim of this is simple – parents AND senior students should get feedback from teachers as regards the level of progress students have made in that subject to date and should hear directly on how to improve or maintain their grades. Senior students will have, we hope, the maturity to take the feedback on board and use it in a positive manner.

LC2*/LCA2* P/S/T Meeting

Monday, 15th October 2018

3rd Year P/T Meeting

Thursday, 8th November 2018

2nd Year and TY P/T Meeting

Thursday, 13th December 2018

1st Year PT Meeting

Thursday, 10th January 2019

LC1*/LCA1* P/S/T Meeting

Monday, 28th January 2019



***Please note that in these year groups, the students themselves must also attend the meeting along with their parents. (P/S/T = Parent/Student/Teacher meeting)**

I would like to highlight with parents that there are some teachers at every parent teacher meeting who teach a high number of students from that year group and can therefore have close to a hundred parents to see. It is crucial that, in order for these teachers to provide feedback to all the parents, that attending parents limit their meeting with these teachers to a few minutes. Teachers will discuss 3 main areas with you – **attendance, behaviour and exam results**. If you require a more in depth discussion with a specific teacher then I suggest you contact them again at a later date through the school office in order to arrange a meeting/phone call. This procedure will allow teachers with large numbers to see all the parents in a timely fashion.

At some parent teacher meetings a red labelled clock may appear on a teacher's desk who has a high number of parents to meet, in order to alert you that they are under these time constraints.

1st Year Mass

The traditional 1st year mass will be held on Thursday, November 15th 2018 at 7pm in Tarbert Church. This is a lovely occasion where students new to the School mark the transition to the Comprehensive School. Further queries can be directed to your child's RE teacher or School Chaplain.

Student Insurance

Parents should be aware that we pay accident insurance for all our students. We pay this from the voluntary contribution that we receive each year from parents. Students have 24 hour cover 365 days a year. This means that in the event of even a minor accident at school or at home, even during holiday times, that incurs any medical expense, then the money can be claimed through Brennan's Insurance Policy. Claim forms are available from the School Office.

School Book Grant

The Book Grant is used to help those who experience financial difficulties with back to school costs. The money is distributed as equitably as possible. It is used primarily to support LC1 students and book grant forms were distributed to each LC1 student.

The grant is then used to pay for the Pre Examination fees for those families who hold medical cards. Any money then left remaining in the fund is used for families of 1st Year students who may be experiencing financial difficulties. It is hoped that these grant forms will be processed as soon as possible.

From time to time families can experience financial hardships. It is never our intention to add to those hardships. However by their nature schools will always have costs associated with them e.g. supervised study, book rental, pre exam fees, TY fees, school outings or field trips. However at Tarbert Comprehensive we try as much as possible to keep these fees as low as we can and we compare very favourably with other second level schools.

I would never want a situation to arise whereby a student is deprived an opportunity to participate in any activity or is embarrassed because of an inability to pay. So if this arises for you during the year please contact Ms. O'Connor, Chaplain, Ms. Moloney or myself and the matter will be dealt with sensitively and in total confidence.

New Junior Certificate

Junior students now study the JCSA (Junior Cycle Student Award) and it will be phased in over the coming years. At the end of their exams students will get a certificate called the JCPA – Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Currently students in 1st year to 3rd year are doing a combination of new courses and old. Current students in Primary School will be studying more and more subjects in line with the new courses as those students enter the Comprehensive School. By 2022 all courses will be in place and recorded on the JCPA for every child.

The following year groups will have the new JCSA in the subjects listed:

- 3rd years 2018/19 – English, Science and Business
- 2nd Years 2018/19 – as above + Irish, French and Art
- 1st Years 2018/19 – as above + Maths, Home Ec., History, Geography, Music

With new courses come new forms of assessment and new ways of teaching. More and more classes will move towards active learning methodologies within the classroom so that students learn by doing and become more and more aware of how they learn. Here are a few new terms you will hear your child mention in the coming months that you may not have heard previously.

In 2nd year (around April/May) students will undertake a **CBA – a classroom based assessment**. This exam is set at a common level and is not worth any final marks but is still invaluable in that it makes students reflect on their own work and progress and allows them demonstrate what they have learnt in a topic to date. CBA's are again completed in 3rd year around Christmas time.

AT's or Assessment Tasks are completed around April/May of 3rd year. It is a written task completed in class time (double class) and is sent away to the SEC for correction. The task is specifically linked to the Christmas CBA so that students are comfortable and familiar with the topic. The AT is worth approximately 10% of the final grade in most subjects.

The following are the dates the SEC have issued for the completion of these forms of assessment.

2nd Year CBA's

Subject:	Window for completion:
Visual Art	Monday 7 th January to Friday 12 th April 2019
Science	Monday 4 th March to Friday 12 th April 2019
Business	Monday 4 th March to Friday 12 th April 2019
MFL – French	Monday 29 th April to Friday 17 th May 2019
English	Monday 29 th April to Monday 20 th May 2019
Gaeilge	CBA 1 in third year

3rds Year CBA's and AT

Subject:	Window for completion: CBA2	Window for completion: AT*
English	Ongoing - Friday 30 th November 2018	Monday 3 rd - Friday 7 th December 2018
Business	Monday 12 th Nov. - Friday 7 th Dec. 2018	Monday 10 th - Friday 14 th December 2018
Science	Friday 7 th Dec. 2018 - Friday 25 th Jan. 2019	Monday 28 th January - Friday 1 st February 2019

All students in the new JCPA also have other areas of learning. So the more your child is involved in School related activities the better – such as being involved on the School football team, choir, young scientist, student council etc. Students from 1st year will keep a log of what they do – by 3rd year this is verified and recorded by the School and acknowledged on the official results.

All JCPA students must also study the area of Wellbeing – this is a combination of SPHE, CSPE, PE and other aspects of care that the School offers. In second year for example, Tarbert Comprehensive computer classes will also contribute to wellbeing as students will examine the notion of digital wellbeing – so that students are aware of appropriate on-line behaviour, dangers online etc.

Finally students will have the normal sit down exams in June of 3rd year. However the final grades have also been changed. A, B and C grades are being phased out. From now on students will have the following descriptors:

Junior Certificate			Junior Cycle	
Level	Percentage	Grade Descriptor	Percentage	Grade Descriptor
Higher, Ordinary, Foundation/ Ard. Gnath, Bonn	≥ 85 to 100	A	≥ 90 to 100	Distinction
	≥ 70 and < 85	B	≥ 75 and < 90	Higher Merit
	≥ 55 and < 70	C	≥ 55 and < 75	Merit
	≥ 40 and < 55	D	≥ 40 and < 55	Achieved
	≥ 25 and < 40	E	≥ 20 and < 40	Partially Achieved
	≥ 10 and < 25	F	≥ 0 and < 20	Not Graded (NG)
	≥ 0 and < 10	NG		

All in all the changes are exciting and we will keep you up to date with developments. For further information please go to www.curriculumonline.ie

Leaving Certificate Results

Congratulations to the class of 2018 who received their excellent results on August 15th last.

A statistical analysis shows that our school is yet again well above the national averages in the point's race. I am also really pleased with the high number of H1 grades achieved this year. On average students received a staggering 72 points more in Tarbert CS for their top 6 subjects than the national average. That is very much in keeping with last year's grades.

Overall 1 student in 5 got over 500 points compared to 12% nationally, while 3 in every 5 got over 400 points, compared to 37% nationally. I am exceptionally proud of these results that are a remarkable testament to the comprehensive, mixed ability, co-educational ethos that infuses this school. I wish to congratulate the students and teachers on the quality of these results.



Pictured the Leaving Certificate Class of 2018.



Pictured with School Principal, Mr Prendiville is Amy Adams from Glin who received the top points in the Class of 2018 and has now gone on to study Medicine in UCC. Congratulations Amy!

Junior Certificate 2018

Mr Prendiville, Principal, congratulated all Junior Cert. students on their excellent results last week – he praised the students themselves for their hard work, their supportive parents and the teachers who encouraged, coaxed, and helped them along the way. Mr Prendiville also attributed their exam success to the co-educational, mixed ability, comprehensive ethos that creates a warm and caring atmosphere in the Tarbert CS community.



Pictured above with Mr Prendiville and Ms Fitzgerald (Year Head) are the top students from the Junior Cert. 2018, Seated L-R, Jack McMonagle (Tarbert), Maura Shine (Glin), Ciara O'Donoghue (Ballylongford), Rosheen Culhane (Glin). Standing L-R, Aisling McElligott (Ballyhahill), Erin Da Silva (Glin), Eoin Sheahan (Athea), Eamon O'Connor (Moyvane), Oisín Moloney (Listowel), Ellen Egan (Tarbert), Anna Shine (Glin), Rachel Martin (Tarbert). These students recorded the equivalent of 73 top grades between them. Well done to all and well done to the entire 3rd Year group of 2018.

Parental Procedures

Parents are reminded that should they wish to collect their son/daughter from the school they must do so in person from the main office and sign them out. This policy is equally true for parents of students from Tarbert village. This procedure is designed as part of our Child Protection Policy and though a little effort is required, it is in everyone's best interest to ensure the policy is complied with. Of equal importance is the necessity for Parents to provide their children with a note when they arrive after 9 a.m. This note should specify the reason for lateness.

Parents are also reminded that it is school policy for students to turn off their mobile phones completely on entering the school grounds. Phones must remain off (not silent or vibrate) all day until leaving the school. Theft of mobile phones occurs rarely but when it does happen we make every effort to locate them. However, ultimately, we cannot accept any responsibility for mobiles lost or stolen during the course of the school day. In fact your child is simply better off leaving the phone at home entirely. The can be viewed in full in your child's journal.

Under no circumstances should students contact parents or vice versa by mobile phone. If necessary all critical messages can be routed through the secretary's office. It is equally unacceptable for students to text parents if they are ill. The school has procedures for dealing with illness that your son/daughter is aware of and this should be reinforced to them. Your co-operation is therefore vital in this regard.

After School Study

For different reasons many students find it difficult to study. Often there can be too many distractions. The internet, snapchat, text messages, noise and Instagram cause havoc to students, even those with the best of intentions. For some the problem is a lack of self-discipline to get into a regular study pattern. It is very frustrating knowing that valuable time is being wasted. At Tarbert Comprehensive School we offer a supervised study program from 4.15pm to 6.15pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. When sufficient numbers of leaving certs sign up, they are allotted their own study centre.

Students have found the program very beneficial in recent years and have the satisfaction of having most if not all of their learning done by early evening. The cost is kept to the bare minimum and hopefully as affordable as possible.

Any parent interested in the service for their son/daughter can look at the School Website for more details under the Curriculums dropdown or you can contact Mr Trench. I strongly encourage all students to consider this great facility, particularly if you are a student of an exam year or if you find it difficult to motivate yourself at home.

Guidance Department

The final year of school is one of the busiest and most challenging times in a young person's life. While studying, there is the added stress of having to decide the next step on the career journey. Students should take time to fully research all their options (check entry requirements, course content, possible careers etc.) and always ensure they have a "Plan B". The new Leaving Certificate Grading Scale with Revised Points is highlighted for your attention. Also listed are some very important websites and key dates. The school will host an information evening for parents on the CAO application process ("Hear"/"Dare" schemes, SUSI Maintenance Grant etc.) later in the term. Students should consult the Guidance Notice Board, the school app and the "Guidance" section of the school website for up-to-date information. Success is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration!

Best of Luck for the year ahead! - **Jeanelle Griffin**

LCVP

LCVP is now held both within school time (for some) and after school time (for others). If your son/daughter is doing Ordinary Level Irish and Ordinary Level English then he/she will automatically do LCVP in School time. However if your son/daughter does Higher Level in any one of (or both) Irish and English, LCVP cannot be done within school time (as Higher level students have extra classes in these subjects). Therefore in order to make LCVP available to these students, I have provided for the teaching of LCVP after School on Tuesdays (LC2) and Thursdays (LC1) from 4pm-5pm **It should be noted that LCVP is a very beneficial additional option for students wishing to maximise their points. LCVP has the advantage of:**

- Providing invaluable future career investigation and CV planning
- Providing a potentially generous points return
- Requiring minimal study and homework compared to other subjects
- Being used on average by 2/3 students who sit it, for points in their top 6 subjects
- Being used by students of all abilities for points – including those who get over 500+ points
- Having the written exam completed in early May of the LC year and not in June

Leaving Certificate Bonus & Revised Points

25 Bonus Points will continue for Higher Level Maths (at grade H6 & above)

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Higher Level Grades	Higher Level Points	% Bands	Ordinary Level Grades	Ordinary Level Points
H1	100	90-100%	O1	56
H2	88	80-89%	O2	46
H3	77	70-79%	O3	37
H4	66	60-69%	O4	28
H5	56	50-59%	O5	20
H6	46	40-49%	O6	12
H7	37	30-39%	O7	0
H8	0	0-29%	O8	0

Revised LCVP Points

Distinction 66 Merit 46 Pass 28

Important Dates

EVENT	DATE	VENUE
Open Day	13th Oct.	UCC Cork
Limerick Colleges Open Day	18th/19th Oct.	U.L., Mary I. & L.I.T.)
Tralee I.T. Open Day	26th Oct.	Tralee Institute of Technology
CAO Online Application Facility Opens	5th Nov.	Online
Kerry IGC Careers Fair	21st Nov.	Killarney

Important Closing Dates

NAME	DATE	DEADLINE
UCAS	15th Oct. 2018	Some Courses Close
	15th Jan. 2019	All Courses Close
CAO Application Deadline	20th Jan. 2019	Early Application Online Discount €30
	1st Feb. 2019	Normal Application Online/Paper €45
	Change of Mind facility opens (Free)	4th May 2019
	Change of Mind facility closes	1st July 2019
HEAR & DARE Schemes	1st Feb. 2019	Apply ONLINE as part of your CAO application
Higher Education Access Route ("HEAR") and Disability Access Route to Education ("DARE")		
	1st Apr. 2019	HEAR & DARE Supporting Documents
Post Leaving Cert Courses	Apply Mid Feb. to August	2019
SUSI Maintenance Grant	Apply April - July	2019

Important Websites

www.qualifax.ie (Essential Course Search Engine)
www.cao.ie (CAO Information & Application)
www.accesscollege.ie (Hear & Dare Schemes)
www.careersportal.ie (Essential Course & Career Portal)
www.ucas.com (Study in England)
www.susi.ie (SUSI Grant Information)

All College Websites for Ireland - www.name.ie
 e.g. www.ucc.ie, www.ul.ie, www.dcu.ie



Best of Luck for the year ahead!